

## Death toll nears 6 million as pandemic enters its 3rd year

By DAVID RISING  
Associated Press

**BANGKOK (AP)** — The official global death toll from COVID-19 is on the verge of eclipsing 6 million — underscoring that the pandemic, now entering its third year, is far from over.

The milestone is the latest tragic reminder of the unrelenting nature of the pandemic even as people are shedding masks, travel is resuming and businesses are reopening around the globe. The death toll, compiled by Johns Hopkins University, stood at 5,997,994 as of Sunday afternoon.

Remote Pacific islands, whose isolation had protected them for more than two years, are just now grappling with their first outbreaks and deaths, fueled

by the highly contagious omicron variant.

Hong Kong, which is seeing deaths soar, is testing its entire population of 7.5 million three times this month as it clings to mainland China's "zero-COVID" strategy.

As death rates remain high in Poland, Hungary, Romania and other Eastern European countries, the region has seen more than 1 million refugees arrive from war-torn Ukraine, a country with poor vaccination coverage and high rates of cases and deaths.

And despite its wealth and vaccine availability, the United States is nearing 1 million reported deaths on its own.



Nurses perform timed breathing exercises on a COVID-19 patient on a ventilator in the COVID-19 intensive care unit at the la Timone hospital in Marseille, southern France, Friday, Dec. 31, 2021.

Associated Press

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# Death toll nears 6 million as pandemic enters its 3rd year

Continued from Front

Death rates worldwide are still highest among people unvaccinated against the virus, said Tikki Pang, a visiting professor at the National University of Singapore's medical school and co-Chair of the Asia Pacific Immunization Coalition.

"This is a disease of the unvaccinated — look what is happening in Hong Kong right now, the health system is being overwhelmed," said Pang, the former director of research policy and cooperation with the World Health Organization. "The large majority of the deaths and the severe cases are in the unvaccinated, vulnerable segment of the population."

It took the world seven



People protest mask mandates outside the State Capitol, Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022, in Hartford, Conn.

Associated Press

months to record its first million deaths from the virus after the pandemic began in early 2020. Four months later another million people had died, and 1 million have died every three months since, until the death toll hit 5 million at the end of October. Now it has reached 6 million — more than the populations of Berlin and Brussels combined, or the entire state of Maryland.

But despite the enormity of the figure, the world undoubtedly hit its 6 millionth death some time ago. Poor record-keeping and testing in many parts of the world has led to an undercount in coronavirus deaths, in addition to excess deaths related to the pandemic but not from actual COVID-19 infections, like people who died from preventable causes but could not receive treatment because hospitals were full.

Edouard Mathieu, head of data for the Our World in Data portal, said that — when countries' excess mortality figures are studied — as many as nearly four times the reported death toll have likely died because of the pandemic. An analysis of excess deaths by a team at The Economist estimates that the number of COVID-19 deaths is between 14 million and 23.5 million.

"Confirmed deaths represent a fraction of the true number of deaths due to COVID, mostly because of limited testing, and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death," Mathieu told The Associated Press. "In some, mostly rich, countries that fraction is high and the official tally can be considered to be fairly accurate, but in others it is highly underestimated." The United States has the biggest official death toll in the world, but the numbers have been trending downward over the last month. Lonnie Bailey lost his 17-year-old nephew, Carlos Nunez Jr., who contracted COVID-19 last April — the same month Kentucky opened his age group to vaccinations. The Louisville resident said the family is still suffering, including Carlos' younger sibling, who had to be hospitalized himself and still has lingering symptoms. The aggressive reopening of the country has been jarring for them to witness.

"For us it is hard to let our guard down; it's going to take a while for us to adjust," Bailey said.

The world has seen more than 445 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, and new weekly cases have been declining recently in all regions except for the Western Pacific, which includes China, Japan and South Korea, among others, the World Health Organization reported this week.

Although the overall figures in the Pacific islands seeing their first outbreaks are small compared to larger countries, they are significant among their tiny populations and threaten to overwhelm fragile health care systems.

Tonga reported its first outbreak after the virus arrived with international aid vessels following the Jan. 15 eruption of a massive volcano, followed by a tsunami. It now has several hundred cases, but — with 66% of its population fully vaccinated — it has so far reported people suffering mostly mild symptoms and no deaths. □

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# Kamala Harris marks 'Bloody Sunday' anniversary in Selma

By KIM CHANDLER

Associated Press

**SELMA, Ala. (AP)** — Vice President Kamala Harris visited Selma, Alabama on Sunday as the nation commemorated a defining moment in the fight for the right to vote, making her trip as congressional efforts to restore the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act have faltered.

President Joe Biden on Sunday renewed his call for the passage of voting legislation.

"The battle for the soul of America has many fronts. The right to vote is the most fundamental," Biden said in a White House statement.

Harris arrived Sunday afternoon in Selma to commemorate the 57th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," the day in 1965 when white state troopers attacked Black voting rights marchers attempting to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The nation's first female vice president — as well as the first African American and Indian American in the role — will speak at the site often referred to as hallowed ground in the fight for voting rights for minority citizens.



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at an event to celebrate Black History Month in the East Room of the White House, Monday, Feb. 28, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

State troopers on March 7, 1965, beat and tear-gassed peaceful demonstrators, including young activist John Lewis, who later became a longtime Georgia congressman. The images of the violence shocked a nation and helped galvanize support for passage of the Voting Rights Act. Harris' visit to the city that served as the cradle of the Voting Rights Act comes as Demo-

crats have unsuccessfully tried to update the landmark law — after a key provision was tossed out by a U.S. Supreme Court decision — and pass additional measures to make it more convenient for people to vote.

In Selma, a crowd gathered hours before Harris was scheduled to speak. Rank-and-file activists of the civil rights movement,

including women who fled the beatings of Bloody Sunday, were seated near the stage. The milestone of Harris becoming the nation's first Black female vice president seemed unimaginable in 1965, they said.

"That's why we marched," Betty Boynton, the daughter-in-law of voting rights activist Amelia Boynton, said.

"I was at the tail end and all

of the sudden I saw these horses. Oh my goodness, and all of the sudden ... I saw smoke. I didn't know what tear gas was. There were beating people" Boynton said.

But Boynton said the celebration at the hub of the voting rights movement is tempered by fears of the impact of new voting restrictions being enacted.

"And now they are trying to take our voting rights from us. I wouldn't think in 2022 we would have to do all over again what we did in 1965," Boynton said.

Ora Bell Shannon, 90, of Selma, was a young mother during the march and ran from the bridge with her children. Ahead of Bloody Sunday, she and other Black citizens stood in line for days at a time trying to register to vote in the then white-controlled city, facing impossible voter tests and long lines.

"They knew you wouldn't be able to pass the test," Shannon recalled.

Biden said the strength of the groundbreaking 1965 Voting Rights Act "has been weakened not by brute force, but by insidious court decisions." □

# Cuomo rips 'cancel culture,' hints at political comeback

By DAVID PORTER

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Just six months after he resigned from office in disgrace over sexual harassment allegations, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo appeared to be hinting at a political comeback in remarks at a Brooklyn church on Sunday.

The Democrat made a campaign-like stop at a Brooklyn church Sunday, delivering a speech in which he condemned "cancel culture." The public appearance, his first since leaving office, came a week after Cuomo's campaign launched a digital and television advertising campaign pushing a similar message: He was driven from office unfairly. Cuomo quoted the Bible several times as he de-

scribed his travails then went on the offensive to attack the "political sharks" in Albany who, he said, "smelled blood" and exploited the situation for political gain.

"The actions against me were prosecutorial misconduct," Cuomo said, repeating a theme he has pushed from the outset. "They used cancel culture to effectively overturn an election."

Democratic State Attorney General Letitia James, who released the report last summer that concluded Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women, hit back at the former governor Sunday.

"Serial sexual harasser Andrew Cuomo won't even spare a house of worship from his lies," James said in a statement. "Even though multiple independent investigations found his vic-

tims to be credible, Cuomo continues to blame everyone but himself."

Cuomo resigned in August, days after an independent probe found he sexually harassed nearly a dozen women and that he and aides worked to retaliate

against an accuser. On Sunday, Cuomo acknowledged his behavior wasn't appropriate but quickly added that nothing he did violated the law.

"I didn't appreciate how fast the perspectives changed," he said. "I've

learned a powerful lesson and paid a very high price for learning that lesson. God isn't finished with me yet."

Cuomo hasn't said he's running for office, but is still sitting on a multimillion dollar campaign war chest he could use to finance another run.

Several district attorneys in New York said they found Cuomo's accusers "credible," but said the available evidence wasn't strong enough to press criminal charges against him. Last month, a New York state trooper sued him claiming he caused her severe mental anguish and emotional distress by touching her inappropriately and making suggestive comments. A Cuomo spokesperson called the suit a "cheap cash extortion." □



Secretary to the Governor Melissa DeRosa, left, joins New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo as he speaks to reporters during a news conference on Sept. 14, 2018, in New York.

Associated Press



# Officials: 7 dead after tornadoes tore through central Iowa

By **SCOTT MCFETRIDGE and JOSH FUNK**

**Associated Press**

**WINTERSET, Iowa (AP)**—Seven people were killed, including two children, when several tornadoes swept through central Iowa, destroying homes and knocking down trees and power lines in the state's deadliest storm in more than a decade, authorities said. Emergency management officials in Madison County said four were injured and six people were killed Saturday when one tornado touched down in the area southwest of Des Moines near the town of Winterset around 4:30 p.m. Among those killed were two children under the age of five and four adults.

In Lucas County, about 54 miles (87 kilometers) southeast of Des Moines, officials confirmed one death and multiple reported injuries when a separate tornado struck less than an hour later.

The state Department of Natural Resources said that person who died was in an RV at a campground at Red Haw State Park in Chariton, Iowa.

Thunderstorms that spawned tornadoes moved through much of Iowa from the afternoon until Saturday night with storms also causing damage in the Des Moines suburb of Nor-



**A utility worker tends to a downed stoplight on Highway 69 in Des Moines, Iowa, on Saturday, March 5, 2022, after a strong storm caused damage in areas of central Iowa.**

**Associated Press**

walk, areas just east of Des Moines and other areas of eastern Iowa. The storms were fueled by warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico. Officials reported a number of homes were damaged, roads were blocked by downed lines and tree branches were shredded by the strong winds. At one point, power outages affected about 10,000 in the Des Moines area.

The storms are the deadliest to occur in Iowa since May 2008 when one tornado destroyed nearly 300 homes and killed nine peo-

ple in the northern Iowa city of Parkersburg. Another tornado a month later killed four boys at the Little Sioux Boy Scout ranch in western Iowa.

The National Weather Service in Des Moines tweeted early Sunday that there were at least three thunderstorms producing tornadoes, but it's "unknown at this time how many tornadoes occurred."

Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Victor Gensini said there have been plenty of examples of deadly storms in March

even though they are more common in April and May. Saturday's storms were not nearly as unusual as the mid-December tornado outbreak that Iowa saw last year, he said.

"The storms that produce these tornadoes — these supercell storms — they don't care what the calendar says," Gensini said. "It doesn't have to say June. It doesn't have to say May. They form whenever the ingredients are present. And they were certainly present yesterday."

Scientists have said that ex-

treme weather events and warmer temperatures are more likely to occur with human-caused climate change.

However, scientifically attributing a storm system to global warming requires specific analysis and computer simulations that take time, haven't been done and sometimes show no clear connection.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation for Madison County, which allows state resources to be used to assist with response and recovery efforts. Madison County Emergency Management Director Diogenes Ayala said 25 to 30 homes were badly damaged.

"This is the worst anyone has seen in a very long time," Ayala said.

Homeowners and volunteers were picking up wood debris and beginning to clear it away Sunday in the rolling hills south of Winterset as chainsaws whirled away in the background.

Amid the remnants of destroyed houses blown off their foundations, a white car sat on its roof and debris hung from the trees. The foundation was all that was left of several homes. The tornado carved a narrow path of destruction along a ridge while several hundred feet away other homes sit undamaged. □



**Hector Rivera and Wandi Blanco put water on hotspots behind their home in Panama City, Fla., Saturday, March 5, 2022, following a wildfire that started Friday.**

**Associated Press**

**PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP)** — Firefighters and emergency workers battled two massive wildfires Sunday in an area of the Florida Panhandle that was still recovering

from destruction caused by a Category 5 hurricane more than three years ago. The 8,000-acre (about 3,237 hectare) Bertha Swamp Road fire and the

## Firefighters battle 2 massive wildfires in Florida Panhandle

1,400-acre (567-hectare) Adkins Avenue fire threatened homes and forced the evacuation of residents of at least 750 homes in Bay County, Florida over the weekend.

The Adkins Avenue fire destroyed two structures and damaged another 12 homes late Friday. Local emergency official said no homes were destroyed and there were no injuries on Saturday, the second day of battling the Adkins Avenue fire.

"No homes damaged. No injuries to residents or responders. Big win for

Bay County!" Bay County emergency officials tweeted early Sunday.

"It is NOT safe to return home at this time. Please be patient as first responders battle these dangerous fires," Bay County officials posted online.

"We understand and recognize that everyone is anxious to go back home, and that it has been a huge inconvenience," said Valerie Sale, a Bay County spokeswoman.

The Adkins Avenue fire has been burning in Bay County since Friday, forcing the evacuation of at least 600

homes, and it was 35% contained Sunday morning.

The much-larger Bertha Swamp Fire started in neighboring Gulf County on Friday but spread to Bay and Calhoun counties on Saturday, forcing the evacuation of another 150 homes. It was 10% contained as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials said Florida Forest Service helicopters had dropped more than 103,000 gallons (about 468,000 liters) of water on the Adkins Avenue fire since Friday, and 25 bulldozers had been deployed to plow fire lines. □



# Italy seizes \$156 million in oligarch wealth, pressing Putin

By COLLEEN BARRY

Associated Press

**MILAN (AP)** — European governments are moving against Russian oligarchs to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin to back down on his war in Ukraine, seizing superyachts and other luxury properties from billionaires on sanctions lists. Italy since Friday has seized 143 million euros (\$156 million) in luxury yachts and villas in some of its most picturesque destinations, including Sardinia, the Ligurian coast and Lake Como. "We must be able to stop Putin's attack, bringing him to the table, and he won't go with niceties," Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio told Italian state TV on Friday, announcing Italy's plans to begin the seizures of property belonging to oligarchs close to Putin.

Italian financial police moved quickly seizing the superyacht "Lena" belonging to Gennady Timchenko, an oligarch close to Putin, in the port of San Remo; the 65-meter (215-foot) "Lady M" owned by Alexei Mordashov in nearby Imperia, featuring six suites and estimated to be worth 65 million euros; as well as villas in Tuscany and Como, according to government



A view of the yacht "Lady M", owned by Russian oligarch Alexei Mordashov, at it is docked at Imperia's harbor, Italy, Saturday, March 5, 2022.

Associated Press

officials.

The villa of Russian-Uzbek business magnate Alisher Usmanov also was seized along the tony Emerald Coast in northern Sardinia, long the playground of the world's wealthiest.

German officials this week denied reports that they had seized Usmanov's yacht in the port of Hamburg. According to the British government, he also owns Beechwood House in Highgate, worth an esti-

mated 48 million pounds, and the 16th-century Sutton Place estate in Surrey. Activists say that going after the oligarchs is tantamount to going after Putin. "Vladimir Putin keeps all his money with the oligarchs," said William Browder, a U.S.-born and London-based financier and human rights activist who was once a major investor in Russia but ran afoul of the government in the late 2000s.

"And this is a very effective

psychological warfare, to start seizing yachts. I think it's demoralizing for the oligarchs, and it's demoralizing for Vladimir Putin. And he's a guy who ... rules by image, you know, is the person who has pictures of himself with the shirt off on a horse. And so it's a bad image to have one of his best friends' yacht seized in the south of France," Browder said.

Germany's Economy Ministry said it was in the process

of "swiftly and effectively implementing the Russia sanctions" but declined to say publicly which assets had been seized, if any.

So far, French authorities have seized a yacht linked to Igor Sechin, a Putin ally who runs the Russian oil giant Rosneft, in the Mediterranean resort of La Ciotat where it arrived in January for repairs.

French officials said Thursday that the crew was preparing for urgent departure when they arrived, even through the repairs were still underway.

Britain, long a haven of oligarch wealth is under pressure to do more. Putin confidant Roman Abramovich, who owns the top-flight football club Chelsea, said this week he would put it up for sale. He has not been sanctioned, but opposition politicians and members of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party have asked why not.

The UK has frozen the assets of the individuals on its own list and is making changes to the law to make it easier to go after those on the lists of allies after criticism that it has been too slow to act. Still, it will take a long time to unravel, as many assets are in shell companies. □

# Blinken vows U.S. support to wary Moldova as Ukraine war rages

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

**CHISINAU, Moldova (AP)**

— U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday pledged America's support to the small, Western-leaning former Soviet republic of Moldova that is coping with an influx of refugees from Ukraine and warily watching Russia's intensifying war with its neighbor.

Blinken met with senior Moldovan officials who are appealing for international assistance in dealing with more than 120,000 refugees from Ukraine that it is now hosting while also seeking security reassurances against potential Russian aggression.

More than 230,000 people have fled into or passed through Moldova from

Ukraine since the war began 11 days ago. Blinken said Moldova's welcoming of refugees is an inspiration to the world.

"We admire the generosity of hospitality, the willingness to be such good friends to people who are in distress, and, indeed, I want to do everything we can to help you deal with the burden that this has imposed," he said before heading to Lithuania.

Russia has troops in Moldova, a country of 2.6 million, stationed in the disputed territory of Transnistria, and they are being closely watched as Russian President Vladimir Putin presses ahead with the invasion of Ukraine.

"This is a subject of high vulnerability and we watch

it carefully," Moldovan President Maia Sandu said. She said there had not yet been any indication that the roughly 1,500 Russian soldiers based in Transnistria had changed posture but stressed that it was a concern given what is happening in Ukraine.

"In this region now there is no possibility for us to feel safe," Sandu said.

Although it is neutral militarily and has no plans to try to become a member of NATO, Moldova formally applied to join the European Union just three days ago in a fast-track bid to bolster its ties with the West. "While we are facing this unprecedented circumstances, we are firmly committed to our path for European integration," Prime



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, and Moldova's President Maia Sandu greet each other as they arrive to attend a joint news conference following their talks in Chisinau, Moldova, Sunday, March 6, 2022.

Associated Press

Minister Natalia Gavriluta said. "We believe that this is an agenda to transform Moldova into a modern,

prosperous European state based on the fundamental values of human rights and the rule of law." □



# North Korea confirms new tests on spy satellite

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

**Associated Press**

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)**

— North Korea performed data transmission and other key tests needed to develop a spy satellite, state media said Sunday, in the second such tests in about a week, indicating the country intends to conduct a prohibited long-range rocket launch soon.

The moves come as North Korea has been carrying out a spate of ballistic missile launches - including one detected by its neighbors on Saturday - in what experts call an attempt to add new weapons systems to its arsenal and pressure the United States into making concessions amid stalled diplomacy.

On Sunday, the North's Korean Central News Agency said it conducted "another important test" the previous day under its plan to develop a reconnaissance satellite. It said authorities tested the satellite's data transmission, reception and ground-based control systems.

The KCNA dispatch didn't directly mention any missile or rocket launches to conduct such satellite-related tests, but it apparently referred to the North's ninth round of missile launches this year, which Seoul, Washington and Tokyo

spotted on Saturday.

Outside experts believe North Korea fired a ballistic missile carrying a camera to perform the tests described in the KCNA report. Last Monday, North Korea said it tested a camera designed to be placed on a reconnaissance satellite and released space-based photos of Earth, a day after its rivals said it conducted a ballistic missile launch.

A spy satellite is among a long wish list of new weapons systems that Korean leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to introduce to cope with what he calls U.S. hostility. To operate a reconnaissance satellite, North Korea must launch a long-range rocket to put it into orbit. But the U.N. bans such a launch by North Korea because it considers that as a cover for testing its long-range missile technology.

It's unclear if North Korea has developed a sufficiently capable camera to be installed on a spy satellite, as the satellite photos the country released last Monday didn't include high-resolution imagery.

After Saturday's test, North Korea didn't immediately disclose new satellite photos, suggesting the country failed to photograph higher-resolution images than earlier ones, said analyst



People watch a TV showing a file image of North Korea's missile launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, March 5, 2022.

**Associated Press**

Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea.

"While it may succeed in what it calls 'a reconnaissance satellite launch,' it would still likely take a very long time for North Korea to obtain militarily meaningful reconnaissance technology because of powerful international sanctions that restrict its import of high-tech equipment and its poor civilian technology," Cheong said.

North Korea put its first and second Earth observation satellites into orbit in 2012

and 2016, but some foreign experts say neither one transmitted any imagery back to North Korea.

Those satellite launches were still believed to have contributed to North Korea's missile development program. In 2017, North Korea carried out three intercontinental ballistic missiles tests that analysts say demonstrated its potential ability to launch nuclear strikes on the American homeland.

Experts say North Korea will likely conduct a spy satellite launch ahead of a ma-

jor political anniversary in April, the 110th birthday of state founder Kim Il Sung, the late grandfather of Kim Jong Un.

Negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington have remained largely stalled for about three years due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea. Earlier this year, North Korea test-fired a variety of sophisticated nuclear-capable missiles including one that analysts say places the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam within its striking distance. □



Luxury towers that dominate the skyline in the Dubai Marina district, center, and the new Dubai Harbor development, right, are seen from the observation deck of "The View at The Palm Jumeirah" in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday, April 6, 2021.

**Associated Press**

By **JON GAMBRELL**

**Associated Press**

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates**

**(AP)** — A global body focused on fighting money laundering has placed the United Arab

Emirates on its so-called "gray list" over concerns that the global trade hub isn't doing enough to stop criminals and militants from hiding wealth there. The decision late Friday

## Anti-money-laundering body puts UAE on global 'gray' list

night by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force puts the UAE, home to Dubai and oil-rich Abu Dhabi, on a list of 23 countries including fellow Mideast nations Jordan, Syria and Yemen.

While not expected to dent business in the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula home to a multitude of economic free zones and real estate ventures, it could strike at the country's carefully managed business-friendly image. Ratings agencies and other financial institutions also consider such a listing as

a risk, which can affect interest rates for loans.

While praising the UAE's "significant progress," the body known as FATF said more needed to be done. Already, the UAE has established a corporate registry and signed extradition agreements with other nations.

However, the UAE long has been known as a place where bags of cash, diamonds, gold and other valuables can be moved into and through. In recent years, the State Department had described "bulk cash smuggling" as "a significant problem" in the

Emirates.

A 2018 report by the Washington-based Center for Advanced Defense Studies, relying on leaked Dubai property data, found that war profiteers, terror financiers and drug traffickers sanctioned by the U.S. had used the city-state's boom-and-bust real estate market as a safe haven for their money.

Emirati officials on Twitter and its state-run WAM news agency rushed to reassure investors that the UAE remained a safe, regulated place to do business and would address the international concerns. □







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## Mexico suspends league soccer matches after massive brawl

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — Mexico's top-division soccer league suspended all matches scheduled for Sunday after a huge brawl among fans during the previous day's match between host Queretaro and Atlas from Guadalajara, the reigning league champion. "We regret and condemn these events, which run contrary to the spirit of our soccer," the Mexican Soccer Federation said in a statement. The suspension affected three matches scheduled for Sunday. The Saturday match was suspended in the 62nd minute after multiple fights broke out in the stands. Security personnel opened the gates to the field so that fans, including women and children, could escape the stands.

Queretaro state authorities said 23 remained hospitalized. Ten were in serious condition and three others were in critical condition with very severe injuries. They may have been the three men who were seen unconscious or badly beaten on the ground, being repeatedly kicked and pummeled in videos posted on social media. FIFA, the international soccer governing body, said in a statement that it was "shocked at the tragic incident that took place at La Corregidora stadium in the city of Queretaro during the fixture between Queretaro and Atlas." It called



Fans clash during a Mexican soccer league match between the host Queretaro and Atlas from Guadalajara, at the Corregidora stadium, in Queretaro, Mexico, Saturday, March 5, 2022.

Associated Press

the violence "unacceptable and intolerable." "FIFA joins the Mexican Football Association and Concacaf (the North American soccer federation) in condemning this barbaric incident and encouraging the local authorities to bring swift justice to those responsible. Our thoughts are with all those who suffered its consequences," the statement said. Queretaro Gov. Mauricio Kuri said Sunday: "What happened yesterday fills me with pain, with shame and a lot of rage. I have no words strong enough to condemn the violence, the abusiveness and the sense-

lessness of what happened yesterday." After the melee broke out, players from visiting Atlas quickly fled to the locker rooms as did some from the Queretaro side. Other Queretaro players, including Uruguayan goalie Washington Aguerre, stayed near the bench trying to calm the fans. After several minutes some of the fights moved to the field where they continued punching and kicking. Some people were armed with chairs and metal bars. One fan could be seen pulling a knife to cut the nets of one goal. Others destroyed one side's bench and some

fought in the tunnel to the field. "The darkest day for Mexican soccer," was the front-page headline in the Mexican newspaper El Universal on Sunday. In fact, violence between gangs of rival soccer fans is commonplace at stadiums in Mexico. Guadalajara is the capital of Jalisco state, and Atlas has also had issues recently with violence among its fans. Last year, the "classic" with crosstown rival Chivas saw a brawl in the stands. "Unfortunately, what is happening in Queretaro ...is happening in my country," said Rafael Márquez,

a former captain of the Mexican national team who started his career with Atlas and later became its coach.

Kuri condemned the violence and said the owners of the Queretaro club would have to answer for what happened. He also pledged to investigate whether authorities or anyone else had been remiss in not quelling the violence. "I have given instructions that the law be applied with all of its consequences," he said.

Both teams issued statements condemning the violence. State authorities said some police were on duty at the stadium, but that it was largely staffed by private security officers. Video footage of the match suggested the security force was largely made up of female officers, who unsuccessfully tried to break up fights. "If the company (soccer team) does not have enough officers or they lack training, we are going to work to hold them responsible," said Guadalupe Murguía, the state interior secretary.

Large squads of police are assigned to security at some soccer matches in Mexico.

"The security at the stadium is a private responsibility, but despite that, I recognize that law enforcement was insufficient and did not act with sufficient speed," Gov. Kuri said. □



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## Aruba to me



**ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive?

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use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a sweet message from Lee-Anna Vitone who visited our Happy Island to celebrate her 50th birthday.

LeeAnna wrote "Aruba to me is the perfect 50th birthday present, I'm thinking to return every year from here on out. It is a vacationers paradise. My 50th birthday present was perfect." □



## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD - As part of our Aruba to me series, in which we invite our visitors to send their favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island, we would like to show appreciation to another of our visitors who have shared what Aruba is to them.**

For today we received a lovely message from Ray Corfey and his partner who are from West Brookfield, Massachusetts, USA.

The beautiful couple wrote "Our favorite place to be. We have been coming here for many years. We Celebrated our 20th, 21st, 23rd and 25th anniversaries here. We love Aruba. The people are so friendly and the food is fantastic." □



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## Ray Ellin also known as Aruba Ray makes a meaningful donation to C.G. Abraham De Veer School

Article written by Willis Fermin San Nicolas - When comedian Ray Ellin, also known as Aruba Ray, saw a Facebook post from US social worker and frequent Aruba visitor Jennifer Koegel, asking for books to be donated to Aruban schools, he put down the microphone, and leaped into action.



students at the C.G. Abraham De Veer School.

The comedian immediately purchased over a hundred books on Miss Koegel's list of classic literature, with titles from authors including Jane Austen, Harper Lee, JD Salinger, John Grisham, Charlotte Bronte, and dozens more. He personally carried them down to Aruba, and delivered them himself to the principal and

Ellin's love for Aruba runs deep, so much so that the front door of his home in NYC is painted with the Aruban flag. And he said getting involved with the book project was an easy decision. "My oldest sister taught me how to read when I was three years old. In elementary school, my mother took my sisters

and me to the library every week to pick out different books. My other sister ended up becoming a very successful writer. I loved getting lost in the different worlds created by Beverly Cleary and Robert Cormier and Judy Blume. I was lucky to have this in my life. Without question, reading is one of the most important and valuable things for kids to be doing. And when I heard that there were Aruban kids without access to these wonderful books, I immediately wanted to help."

This book project was launched in September 2021, when Miss Koegel started the initiative with Aruban resident Charlotte Wolff Croes, who was the owner of "The Home-school@Paradera". Miss Croes passed away in January, and now taxi driver Robert Croes is helping Miss Koegel collect and distribute the books. The program expanded to other schools; to date, eight different MAVO schools have received close to 2,000 books.

It is an enormous undertaking for Miss Koegel to facilitate this program - she collects books from various sources in America, has to deliver them to people in America who are en route to Aruba, and then arrange for distribution to the Aruban schools. She does this for no pay, and spends her



own money to do so - but she thinks it is well worth it.

"The overwhelming response to this project has exceeded my expectations. The respect for this project has been evidence that Aruba has the best travelers who are committed to helping the community. Through networking, I have made so many new friends and proven that small contributions can quickly make a significant impact."

And while Ellin was moved by Koegel's plea on social media, this wasn't the first time he has come to aid causes in Aruba. Over the years he has donated his services as a host and comedian to raise money for the Animal Relief Foundation (ARF), the Aruban Special Olympics team, and during the pandemic, when zero income was coming in to the Aruban economy, Ellin produced online comedy shows from his home in New York City, donating all of the ticket sales, raising thousands of

dollars to benefit The Happy To Give Back Foundation. Ellin did these shows while grieving the sudden loss of the same sister that taught him to read as a small child. She unexpectedly passed away two weeks before the first lockdown in the US.

Ellin wants other visitors to Aruba to assist in this cause. "People who love Aruba can easily help. Just call Jennifer Koegel in the United States at 201-704-5415. Every book counts!"

And Ellin has asked his fellow comedians to get involved as well. Each comedian who performs at his Aruba Ray's Comedy Shows has been asked to bring books with them to Aruba. In return, Ellin gives each comedian an acai bowl from Eduardo's Beach Shack.

"This is more than a fair deal," laughed Ellin. "The kids will feel good, and the comedian will feel good. The only thing better? Reading a great novel WHILE eating the acai."

Ray Ellin's "Aruba Ray's Comedy Show" is officially TripAdvisor's most popular nightlife activity and show in Aruba. Visit [www.rayellin.com](http://www.rayellin.com) or [www.arubacomedy.com](http://www.arubacomedy.com) to learn more about Ellin, comedy, or books.



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by Urvin Croes

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# New offices for the hybrid era? Many companies are on board

By JOSH FUNK

AP Business Writer

**OMAHA, Neb. (AP)** — If you build a shiny new office building, will your employees show up to work in it? Many U.S. companies are banking on it because they believe working in person is better for collaboration and training young employees. So even though most employees are still working from home offices and dining room tables today, some companies are willing to spend big on showplace headquarters. Businesses recognize there is a place for offices despite the fact that they plan to give workers more flexibility to work from home and might see cost savings from limiting their real estate holdings.

In a sign of how committed companies are to keeping offices, some 57% of the more than 2,300 office projects that giant architecture firm Gensler is now working on were started last year, in the middle of the pandemic. But as they're building, companies are tweaking designs to reflect that offices may become spots that workers visit primarily to collaborate with others, instead of places where they toil all day, every day.

Jordan Goldstein, the co-firm managing principal at Gensler, said companies are placing a premium on having more meeting rooms with the technology to accommodate remote and in-person participants, as well as more flexible space for people to choose where they work within the office.

Mutual of Omaha plans to build a glassy new headquarters in its namesake Nebraska city that could wind up as Omaha's tallest building.

But the insurance company says the plans for its new building reflect its commitment to flexible work. The company has 4,000 employees in the Omaha metro area but is planning a building that can only accommodate between 2,200 and 2,500 people on any given day, Mutual spokesman Jim Nolan said.



**Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, left, and Mutual of Omaha CEO James Blackledge announce plans for a new Mutual of Omaha headquarters skyscraper on the site of the current downtown library, Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022.**

Associated Press

"The only way that works is by embracing remote and hybrid work," he said.

The number of people working remotely is clearly growing because so many companies learned they could do it during the pandemic. The Society for Human Resource Management estimates the number of totally remote U.S. workers will double to roughly 36 million people by 2025. But the CEO of that trade group, Johnny C. Taylor Jr., said that will still only account for a little over 20% of the workforce. The other nearly 80% will work in an office at least part of the time. Another survey done last year by CBRE Group, the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm, showed that 87% of large companies planned to use a hybrid schedule after the pandemic, with workers in the office part of the time. And separate worker surveys that SHRM and Gensler conducted last fall both showed that more than half of workers wanted to be back in the office at least one day a week.

But so far businesses have been slow to bring employees back. An average of 36.8% of the workforce was back in offices during the fourth week of February in 10 major U.S. cities

monitored by Kastle Systems, which tracks building access-card swipes. That number has been creeping up since early January when it fell as low as 23% during the omicron surge. Mutual of Omaha CEO James Blackledge said bringing people together in an office at least periodically will boost productivity and creativity, and having a gleaming new \$433 million office should help the company attract new talent. Plus, the new headquarters will likely be smaller overall than Mutual's current headquarters complex, but the exact size will be determined later in the design process.

Elsewhere, two high profile projects already underway are Walmart's new headquarters being built in Bentonville, Arkansas, and the new New York City home for bank JP Morgan Chase. Walmart said it was overdue for a new headquarters regardless of the pandemic because it is currently spending tens of millions of dollars every year to maintain an outdated patchwork of more than 20 offices in northwest Arkansas for its administrative and support staff.

JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon has said that the rise of work-from-home might mean the company only

needs 60 desks for every 100 employees because they will be shared. But he remains committed to a new headquarters for 12,000 to 14,000 of the bank's employees because many tasks will still need to be done in person. Deluxe, the company once known primarily for printing checks that now processes nearly \$3 trillion in payments a year, invested \$12.2 million during the pandemic in a new 94,000-square-foot Minneapolis headquarters that opened last fall. When they return on a more regular basis later this month, employees will be expected to be there more often than they work from home. But the new headquarters is less than one-third the size of Deluxe's old one. The company cut its overall real estate footprint in half nationwide to better reflect its current needs with more people working remotely. "There are very, very few jobs that are just individual contributor jobs with little or no interaction required from others," he said.

McCarthy, like many CEOs, says he believes office work is better for training and mentoring younger employees because they can watch and interact with their coworkers better and get more immediate feedback on their work.

The roughly 100 headquarters workers at shoe and apparel company Merrell moved into a new office in Rockford, Michigan, in January. The project was in the works before the pandemic began, but CEO Chris Hufnagel said the company reworked the plan after it became clear that many employees would still work from home, at least part of the time. Hufnagel said he believes the office will be the "epicenter" for the company's work.

"I think everyone realizes that there are parts of our jobs that we do better when we are together," Hufnagel said.

And then there are companies that plan to largely do away with their offices in favor of remote work. But even those firms may keep a small office presence.

Intradiem CEO Matt McConnell said the software company had its most profitable year ever in 2021 and didn't miss a beat while its 150 employees and 75 contractors were all working remotely. After checking with employees, the company shifted to a remote-first plan and will let its current headquarters lease expire at the end of 2022.

"It's just this big, empty space that no one is using. It doesn't make any sense to maintain that," McConnell said.

But Intradiem, which is based in Alpharetta, Georgia, will likely still maintain a smaller headquarters with space for its IT workers to put together equipment to send out to home-based workers, and the company will encourage teams to occasionally get together in person. They may also rent some space at shared offices run by WeWork for employees across the country to use.

Modular flooring manufacturer Interface just opened a new headquarters in 2018, but the pandemic prompted the company to spend \$400,000 remodeling the building and investing in new technology and furniture to adjust to workers only being in the office part of the time. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 46 Painter Degas
  - 47 Winter gliders
  - 6 Hardly a fan
  - 11 Elevator stop
  - 12 Spanish resort isle
  - 13 Choir member
  - 14 Saloon orders
  - 15 Couch
  - 17 Drake's music
  - 18 Be sociable
  - 22 Royal address
  - 23 Leg parts
  - 27 Clickable pictures
  - 29 Ice house
  - 30 Roosevelt and Kennedy
  - 32 Hawaiian dance
  - 33 Paint mess
  - 35 Sty dweller
  - 38 Jekyll's evil alter ego
  - 39 Boise's state
  - 41 Really impressed
  - 45 Visit unexpectedly
- DOWN**
- 1 Toward the stem
  - 2 — de France
  - 3 Junior, to senior
  - 4 Things to tie up
  - 5 Slip
  - 6 Small grill
  - 7 Lincoln nickname
  - 8 Stratum
  - 9 Poet Pound
  - 10 Grating sound
  - 16 Diet no-no
  - 18 "— some-thing I said?"
  - 19 Pleasant
  - 20 Stepped on
  - 21 Strong side
  - 24 Surfeit
  - 25 Golf goal
  - 26 Fly high
  - 28 Drawing-off tubes
  - 31 Cunning
  - 34 French farewell
  - 35 Card symbols
  - 36 Pop star
  - 37 Stare in disbelief
  - 40 Concealed
  - 42 Grow older
  - 43 Combat
  - 44 Hosp.

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Saturday's answer

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35	36	37		38					
39			40			41	42	43	44
45						46			
47						48			

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-7

## CRYPTOQUOTE

SWB TLD N ZBB NS. NI DGII

TLYS SWB ELNYKGT. DGH

MGSSL VHS HV TNSW SWB

ELNY. UGCCD VLESgy

Saturday's Cryptoquote: WHOEVER STOPS UP HIS EAR AT THE CRY OF THE POOR SHALL CRY HIMSELF AND NOT BE HEARD. — HEBREW PROVERB

## 'The Batman' gives movie theaters a new hope with big launch



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Zoe Kravitz, left, and Robert Pattinson in a scene from "The Batman."

Associated Press

By LINDSEY BAHR  
AP Film Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Batman has his fair share of pressures, from saving Gotham to saving movie theaters. And while they're both still decidedly works in progress, "The Batman," starring Robert Pattinson, managed to give a little glimmer of hope to both by grossing \$128.5 million in North America, according to studio estimates Sunday. The latest relaunch of the 80-year-old comic book character is well above Warner Bros.' conservative estimates going into the weekend, which had the film pegged for a debut in the \$90 million range. It's the best opening of 2022 and the second best of the pandemic, though it's more than \$100 million shy of "Spider-Man: No Way Home's" still unbelievable \$260 million opening weekend in December.

"The Batman" opened this weekend exclusively in theaters in 4,217 locations on over 12,500 screens in North America. There were some fan events on Tuesday and Wednesday leading into Thursday pre-shows in about 3,300 locations. All

told, by the close of Friday, "The Batman" had already grossed \$57 million. No other major studio dared compete with their own new film. Internationally, "The Batman" earned \$120 million, bringing its global total to \$248.5 million. Warner Bros. halted its release in Russia following the country's invasion of Ukraine, saying that the company would monitor the situation as it evolves. Many major studios made similar decisions with their films.

Reviews have been largely positive for this new iteration of the caped crusader. Director Matt Reeves and co-writer Peter Craig set "The Batman" in Bruce Wayne's second year of donning the cape. Corruption is rampant in Gotham and some well-known villains are not yet fully formed, but there's a serial killer afoot and Pattinson's Batman and Gordon, played by Jeffrey Wright, are on a mission to find the mysterious Riddler (Paul Dano).

It's been a long road for "The Batman" to make it to theaters. The original plan was for it come out in June 2021, but that was pushed

several times due in part to COVID-related production shutdowns. The film cost around \$200 million to produce, not to mention the millions spent on marketing and distribution. And a lot is riding on "The Batman," with future films and an HBO Max spinoff series both planned.

As the omicron variant surged in December, Warner Bros. was faced once more with a hard decision: Delay the release further or commit to the March opening. Under the advice of epidemiologists, in January they decided to go forward and start spending significant money on marketing. "We knew the movie was exceptional. We knew fans would embrace it. But we didn't know what the pandemic would hold," said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros.' president of domestic distribution. "Theater owners really stepped up and showed their showmanship ... it was really a collective win."

"The Batman" is also the first movie in over a year that Warner Bros. has released exclusively in theaters. In 2021, the studio adopted a hybrid release strategy debuting films from "Dune" to "Suicide Squad" in theaters and on HBO Max simultaneously, which may have helped streaming subscriptions, but not the box office or movie theaters.

"The box office is back with a vengeance," said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's senior media analyst. "This is a real turning point for the industry. The box office year has been moving in fits and starts. There have been some solid performances but no blockbuster breakout opener in 2022. This is great for movie theaters."

So how does Pattinson's stack up against his predecessors? It's the fourth biggest opening for a Batman movie in North America. As far as lifetime profits, only time will tell, but Batman as a \$1 billion franchise is a relatively recent phenomenon. □

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# U.N. envoy Angelina Jolie in Yemen ahead of fundraising summit

BY SAMY MAGDY  
Associated Press

**CAIRO (AP)** — Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie on Sunday visited war-wrecked Yemen to show solidarity with displaced families in hopes of mobilizing support for an incoming fundraising conference, the United Nations said. Jolie, who is special envoy for the U.N. on refugee issues, landed in the southern coastal city of Aden to meet with families and refugees there. Aden is the seat of the internationally recognized government. The U.N. refugee agency said it hopes that Jolie's visit would draw attention to growing humanitarian needs in Yemen, the Arab World's poorest country, ahead of the annual High Level Pledging Conference for Yemen on March 16. "As we continue to watch the horrors unfolding in Ukraine and call for an immediate end to the conflict and humanitarian access, I am here in Yemen

to support people who also desperately need peace. The situation here is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world," Jolie said in a post on her Instagram account. Yemen has been convulsed by civil war since 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthi rebels took control of the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north, forcing the government to flee to the south, then to Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition, backed at the time by the United States, entered the war in 2015 to try to restore Yemen's government to power. The conflict has since become a regional proxy war that has killed more than 150,000 people, including over 14,500 civilians, according to 2022 data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Project. It also created the world's worst humanitarian crisis. According to the U.N. refugee agency, about 66% of Yemen's 30 million people



rely on humanitarian assistance for their daily survival, including over 4.2 million displaced people and 102,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. The head of the World Food Program, David Beasley, told The Associated Press last month that

around 13 million people were heading toward starvation in Yemen due to the protracted conflict and lack of funding. □

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Child Abuse Prevention  
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# MLB reacts angrily to locked-out players, season still off

By **RONALD BLUM**  
AP Baseball Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Major League Baseball reacted angrily to the latest offer by locked-out players when bargaining resumed Sunday, accusing the union of backtracking and showing no sign of a breakthrough to get the derailed season back on track.

The squabbling sides talked for 95 minutes on the 95th day of the lockout, largely restating their positions to each other. Talks broke off Tuesday after nine days of negotiations in Jupiter, Florida, and Commissioner Rob Manfred canceled the first two series of the season for each team, a total of 91 games.

This was the first meeting since then, coming in the first season delayed by labor strife since 1995. Manfred was in the MLB offices Sunday but did not attend the bargaining sessions.

The union followed the four-day recess by putting many of its proposals in writing. "We were hoping to see movement in our direction to give us additional flexibility and get a deal done quickly," MLB spokesman Glen Caplin said. "The players' association chose to come back to us with a proposal that was worse than Monday night and was not designed to move the process forward. On some issues, they even went backwards. Simply put, we are deadlocked."

Players declined to publicly respond to MLB but have maintained they withdrew their proposals for expanded free agency and arbitration and decreased



Major League Baseball Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem, left, Senior Vice President Patrick Houlihan, center, and Executive Vice President Morgan Sword, right, arrive at the office of the players' association in New York for labor negotiations, Sunday, March 6, 2022. MLB spokesman Glen Caplin is at far left.

We will try to figure out how to respond, but nothing in this proposal makes it easy."

Trying to resolve baseball's second-longest labor stoppage, the sides remained far apart on luxury tax, minimum salaries and the proposed bonus pool for pre-arbitration eligible players. The union lowered its starting point for the bonus pool by \$5 million to \$80 million but left its proposals for the luxury tax and minimum salary unchanged.

Players declined to publicly respond to MLB but have maintained they withdrew their proposals for expanded free agency and arbitration and decreased

revenue sharing while reducing their request on the bonus pool from an original \$120 million. They also have offered to agree to uniform and helmet advertising.

After the main session, Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem and union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer held a one-on-one meeting. Players suggested the sides meet again Monday, and MLB told the union it would get back with a decision on whether to meet.

Among the few areas with new proposals, players said a fast-track competition committee should include four union appointees, six management members and one umpire.

The group would consider rules changes for no earlier than 2023 covering a pitch clock, limiting defensive shifts and using larger bases, and it would be able to recommend changes during the offseason with 45 days' notice for implementation. MLB last week proposed that the committee include six management officials, two union representatives and one umpire. Currently, management can only change rules with union consent or unilaterally with one year of notice. Players said they will not allow the committee to consider one topic MLB asked to be included: robots to call balls and strikes.

Associated Press

The union offered to increase the postseason from 10 teams to 12 but said they are willing to discuss management's desire for 14 if MLB would consider a "ghost win" in the first round, which management isn't interested in. The higher seeds would open the best-of-five playoff with a 1-0 series lead.

Players want to raise the luxury tax threshold from \$210 last season to \$238 million this year, \$244 million in 2023, \$250 million in 2024, \$256 million in 2025 and \$263 million in 2026. MLB is at \$220 million in each of the next three seasons, \$224 million in 2025 and \$230 million in 2026.

Tax rates would remain unchanged and direct amateur draft pick compensation for free agents would be eliminated.

The union lowered its plan for the pre-arbitration bonus pool from \$85 million but asked for \$5 million annual increases over the remainder of the deal. MLB last offered \$30 million, up from \$25 million, with no annual increase, and suggested the union had orally floated a figure of lower than \$80 million when the sides discussed possible trade-offs Monday night.

As part of an overall agreement, players agreed to withdraw their proposed expansion of salary arbitration for players with at least two years of service but less than three. □



Sean Williams, a rookie musher from Chugiak, Alaska, takes his sled dogs through a snowstorm in downtown Anchorage, Alaska, on Saturday, March 5, 2022, during the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Associated Press

**WILLOW, Alaska (AP)** — The 50th running of the Iditarod

Trail Sled Dog Race started Sunday with 49 mushers set-

## They're off: Mushers begin trek to Nome; Seavey seeks record

ting their sights on Alaska's western coast.

The race will take the mushers across Alaska's untamed and unforgiving terrain, including two mountain ranges, the frozen Yukon River and the unpredictable Bering Sea ice. The winner is expected to cross the finish line in the western Alaska coastal community of Nome about nine days after the start. For the first time ever in 2021, the race did not finish in Nome because of

the pandemic. Instead, the race started in Willow, went to the ghost town of Iditarod and then doubled back to Willow.

Seavey is looking to make history by becoming the first musher to hold six titles. Seavey has said he will likely take a break after this year's race to spend time with his daughter.

There are two four-time champions in the race with Martin Buser and Jeff King. Buser is running in his 39th Iditarod, and King stepped

in just days before the race started to run musher Nic Petit's team after Petit said on Facebook he contracted COVID-19. Also in the race are 2018 winner Joar Leifseth Ulsom and 2019 winner Pete Kaiser.

Fifteen mushers signed up but withdrew from the race before it started, including Petit and the 2020 winner Thomas Waerner of Norway, who wasn't able to secure travel documents to the U.S. □



# Tatum's 54 leads Celtics past Durant, Irving, Nets 126-120

By JIMMY GOLEN

AP Sports Writer

**BOSTON (AP)** — The challenge to Jayson Tatum against a Brooklyn lineup that featured a rare appearance from both Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving: "Take the alpha approach." "Be the best guy on the court each night," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said he told Tatum before Tatum scored a season-high 54 points to lead Boston to a 126-120 victory over the uncommonly intact Nets. "He takes pride in the matchup going against high-level opponents." Durant played in his second game since mid-January and scored 37 for the Nets, becoming the 23rd player in NBA history to reach 25,000 points. Irving joined him for just the fourth time all season, scoring 19 in his first game in three weeks and his first in Boston since he was pelted with a water bottle during the playoffs last year.

"Those matchups — when you're playing one of the better teams in the league, two of the best guys — as a competitor, those are the kinds of moments that as a kid you looked forward to," Tatum said. "When those opportunities come, you try to make the most of it." Tatum scored a 34 points in the second half, and Jaylen Brown scored 21 for the Celtics. Brown, who was cleared to return to Boston's lineup after testing his sprained ankle pregame, beat the 24-second clock to hit a 3-pointer and give Boston a 121-115 lead with 40 seconds left. Durant missed a jumper the next time down — complaining that he was fouled, with no luck. Tatum was fouled the next possession and, as "MVP!" chants rang out in the TD Garden, he hit one of two free throws to surpass his previous season high of 51. He added a pair of free throws in the final seconds for the second-highest total of his career. "It was chaos. Good chaos," said Marcus Smart, who had 14 points and nine assists. "It was a fun game and it was a fun five

minutes to be a part of."

The Celtics have won five of their last six and 21 of their last 27 games.

**TRIBUTES AND TAKEDOWNS** Tatum, who played one season at Duke before the Celtics drafted him No. 3 overall in 2017, said he thought about attending Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski's final home game on Saturday night, a 94-81 loss to North Carolina. But the Celtics' 1 p.m. Sunday start made it difficult. "I definitely wish I could have been there, for the last game. It was an incredible run, 42 years, everything he's accomplished at Cameron Indoor Stadium," Tatum told a reporter who went to California, with Brown, who also went to Cal, at his side. "Definitely

a better atmosphere than Cal."

**UNHAPPY RETURNS**

Irving was booed by Boston fans still irked that he opted out of his contract after professing his love for the city. On his last visit — the Celtics' first full house since the pandemic began — a fan threw a water bottle at him when he left the court following a playoff victory. Irving stomped on the Celtics' leprechaun logo at midcourt after that game. On Sunday, former Celtics player Glen "Big Baby" Davis was sitting courtside wearing a T-shirt that read "Respect the Logo." "I know it's going to be like that the rest of my career coming in here," Irving said. "It's like the scorned girlfriend who wants an explanation on



Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant, left, drives toward the basket as Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) tries to defend in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 6, 2022, in Boston.

Associated Press

why I left but still hoping for a text back. I'm just like, 'It was fun while it lasted.'"

**EARLY ON**

The Nets scored 11 straight points midway through the third and opened their big-

gest lead of the game, 90-81, with just over a minute left in the quarter. But Boston scored eight in a row to cut it to one point, then took the lead on the first basket of the fourth. □

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your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with chocolate sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

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Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

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From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all through 2021, and hopefully will continue to do so in 2022. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



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